

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 230600Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2820
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 3623

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK, IR, UR
SUBJECT: DAOUD INTERVIEW WITH FINANCIAL TIMES CORRESPONDENT

REF: A) KABUL 817 B) KABUL 2127 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. KABUL TIMES (MAY 21) CARRIED A LENGTHY INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT DAOUD BY FINANCIAL TIMES CORRESPONDENT, KEVIN RAFFERTY, IN WHICH THE AFGHAN LEADER CONCENTRATED ON PAKISTAN/AFGHAN RELATIONS, AS WELL AS, TO A LESSER EXTENT, ON KABUL'S TIES WITH TEHRAN. DAOUD SEEMED TO SOFTEN--EVER SO SLIGHTLY--HIS STANCE ON THE RIGHTS OF HIS PUSHTUN AND BALUCH BROTHERS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, HE MADE IT APPARENT THAT RELEASE OF CERTAIN PRISONERS HELD IN PAK JAILS (INCLUDING ABDUL WALI KHAN) WAS A NECESSARY PRE-CONDITION FOR REACHING ANY BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING WITH PAKISTAN. HE DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN AS
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"CONFUSED", A PORTRAYAL WHICH COULD HAVE CONSTITUTED A CAUTIONARY SIGNAL TO HIS EASTERN NEIGHBORS THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE COURSE OF EVENTS IN PAKISTAN. DAOUD WAS REASONABLY UPBEAT ON AFGHAN/IRANIAN RELATIONS--HE FLATLY STATED THAT NO MISUNDERSTANDING RE THE HELMAND EXISTED--INDICATING THAT HE PROBABLY DOES NOT WISH TO JEOPARDIZE WHATEVER POSITIVE RESULTS MAY HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED DURING

THE RECENT VISIT OF HIS BROTHER MOHAMMAD NAIM TO TEHRAN.
(TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.)
END SUMMARY.

2. PAKISTAN. THE LENGTHIEST EXCHANGE IN THE INTERVIEW CONCERNED AFGHAN/PAK RELATIONS, AND WAS MARKED LESS BY THE BREAKING OF SOME SLIGHT NEW GROUND THAN BY DAOUD'S UNUSUAL RESTRAINT IN FIELDING NUMEROUS LEADING QUESTIONS. THE PRESIDENT REITERATED THE STANDARD LINE THAT THE "SOLE POLITICAL DIFFERENCE" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAS BEEN AFGHANISTAN'S "SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PUSHTUN AND BALUCH BRETHREN". DAOUD POINTED OUT THAT LAST YEAR'S TWO SUMMIT VISITS HAD HELPED CLARIFY EACH COUNTRY'S POSITION, AND HAD TAKEN PLACE IN A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY REGARDING THE NEXT STEP IN BILATERAL TALKS, HE CLAIMED IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SAY ANYTHING DEFINITE, AND THAT "UNFORTUNATELY, EVENTS HAVE NOW TAKEN PLACE IN PAKISTAN WHICH HAVE CREATED A CONFUSED SITUATION". DAOUD ASSERTED THAT, IN ANY CASE, THE BALL WAS NOW IN PAKISTAN'S COURT, BUT THAT AS LONG AS A LARGE NUMBER OF PUSHTUN AND BALUCH LEADERS--INCLUDING ABDUL WALI KHAN--REMAINED IN PRISON, FURTHER TALKS MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO BRING ABOUT, AND REACHING ANY UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE "EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT". DAOUD REFUSED THE BAIT WHEN RAFFERTY ASKED IF THE PRESIDENT WERE SAYING THAT THE CONDITIONS FOR NORMALIZING PAK/AFGHAN RELATIONS INCLUDED THE CREATION OF PUSHTUNISTAN AND A REFERENDUM ON THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER
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AND BALUCHISTAN PROVINCES. HE REPLIED THAT "WE WILL NOT SET FORTH ANY DEFINITE CONDITIONS", BUT THAT THE PUSHTUN AND BALUCH "BRETHREN" SHOULD SAY THEMSELVES WHAT THEY WANT, AND SHOULD DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINIES. AS FOR THE FORM IN WHICH THEY MIGHT EXPRESS THESE DESIRES, DAOUD SAID THEY COULD USE "ANY FORM WHICH THEY MAY LIKE".

3. IRAN. DAOUD CHARACTERIZED AFGHAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS AS "UNDOUBTEDLY FRIENDLY", AND, IN RESPONSE TO A LONG QUESTION ON THE STATUS OF THE HELMAND AGREEMENT, SAID THAT "THE SUBJECT OF THE HELMAND WATER HAS BEEN SETTLED BY THE PREVIOUS REGIME AND A TREATY HAS BEEN SIGNED IN THIS REGARD. THEREFORE, THERE DOES NOT REMAIN ANY MISUNDERSTANDING". DAOUD CITED THE RECENT TRIP TO IRAN BY HIS BROTHER MOHAMMAD NAIM, AND CLAIMED THE VISIT "HAD YIELDED USEFUL RESULTS", AND THAT THE "JOINT COMMISSION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL HOLD TALKS IN THE NEAR FUTURE".

4. SOVIET UNION. IN ONE BRIEF REFERENCE TO THE USSR, DAOUD AGAIN REJECTED DESCRIPTIONS OF AFGHANISTAN AS A SOVIET SATELLITE, AND ASSERTED THAT AFGHAN POLICY IS ONE OF FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL COUNTRIES, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT "WE OVERLOOK OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY".

5. DOMESTIC POLITICS. REGARDING THE STILL-TO-BE-NAMED VICE-PRESIDENT(S) CALLED FOR IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION, DAOUD SAID THAT THE "PROBABILITY" EXISTS OF SELECTING SOMEONE FOR THIS POSITION "IN THE NEAR FUTURE".

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 3623

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. COMMENT: DAOUD'S PORTRAYAL OF THE AFGHAN VIEW OF THE ONE POLITICAL "DIFFERENCE" BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN GENERALLY TRACKS WITH PAST STATEMENTS HE HAS MADE ALONG THESE LINES, MOST RECENTLY IN HIS LOYA JIRGAH SPEECH (REF A) AND IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A FINNISH CORRESPONDENT (REF B). IN CONTRAST TO THESE EARLIER STATEMENTS, HOWEVER, DAOUD THIS TIME REFERRED TO THE "LEGITIMATE" RIGHTS OF PUSHTUNS AND BALUCHIS RATHER THAN TO THEIR "INALIENABLE" RIGHTS. SUCH A FORMULATION STRIKES US AS SOFTER THAN HERETOFORE, BUT THE PRESIDENT OFFSETS THIS WITH THE REFERENCE TO ABDUL WALI KHAN, AS

WELL AS WITH HIS CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT THE RELEASE OF
POLITICAL PRISONERS WAS A FIRM PRECONDITION FOR REACHING
ANY BILATERAL AGREEMENT. MOREOVER, HIS DESCRIPTION OF A
CONFUSED SITUATION IN PAKISTAN WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM
EVENTS IN THAT COUNTRY CONCEIVABLY COULD HAVE CONSTI-
TUTED A PUBLIC SIGNAL TO PAKISTAN THAT KABUL IS CONCERNED
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OVER POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS OF FURTHER UNSETTLING
DEVELOPMENTS IN ITS NEIGHBOR TO THE EAST.

7. AS FOR IRAN, DAOUD'S FIRM STATEMENT THAT NOTHING
IS AMISS CONCERNING THE HELMAND TREATY, AND IN THE
UPCOMING BILATERAL ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS, IMPLIES THAT
THE AFGHAN PRESIDENT, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, DOES NOT
WISH TO SAY ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT CAUSE A POSSIBLE SET-
BACK IN AFGHAN/IRANIAN RELATIONS.

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